



West Nile Virus Prevention Activities

What is DHHS doing to reduce mosquito populations?

Mosquito monitoring and abatement are the key goals for the DHHS' Vector Control Program. The Program controls mosquito breeding in public areas by regularly identifying potential mosquito breeding areas and killing mosquito populations. DHHS' services public areas with stagnant water such as wetlands, streets, curbsides, pump stations, and abandoned swimming pools and treats them proactively with insecticides and larvacides. The DHHS also treats flood control channels and storm water runoff systems.

The DHHS sets mosquito traps and has sentinel chicken coops throughout the City of Long Beach for WNV monitoring and testing. Live mosquito samples are collected and sent to the State Department of Health Services for WNV testing. Blood samples are taken from chicken flocks to determine if there is any WNV activity. Dead birds are also picked up and those that meet the State's criteria are tested for WNV. Fish of the *Gambusia* family, commonly called mosquito fish, are used in certain ponds and lakes to control mosquito larvae. Owners can also use these fish in their ponds on their property to control mosquito breeding.

How is DHHS working with local vector control agencies to reduce mosquito breeding?

The DHHS' Vector Control Program is working closely with other vector control districts (e.g., Compton Creek Vector Control District and Greater Los Angeles Vector Control District) in Long Beach on efforts to eliminate mosquito breeding. Additionally, DHHS is working with these and other vector control districts and media consultants on a regional public information campaign on WNV. The DHHS also maps the locations of mosquito traps, sentinel chickens and dead birds and the respective test results to monitor areas within the City which requiring spraying.

How does DHHS respond to complaints about standing or stagnant water?

DHHS will log all complaints related to standing or stagnant water and refer complaints outside the DHHS Vector Control Program to the appropriate district. Vector Control staff will visit the site within three (3) days to determine the extent of mosquito activity and the need for treatment. Residents making complaints will be notified about the outcome of the inspection, and if any corrective action was taken. Educational material may be left with the resident, as well.

What is DHHS doing to inform the public about reducing their risk of WNV?

The DHHS provides WNV informational brochures and leaflets in English, Spanish and Khmer. These brochures have been distributed to all of the City's library branches, the City Council Offices and the Neighborhood Resource Center. They are also available at the DHHS. DHHS also provides presentations upon request and distributes information at community events. Press releases and health alerts are also issued to the media and the public. Information on WNV is also available on the Department's website, at www.longbeach.gov/health. Public Service Announcements in English and Spanish have appeared on local cable television stations. DHHS is currently working with consultants on a broader outreach campaign on WNV including radio and print advertising. This outreach campaign will involve several corporate sponsors, including Albertsons, Savon Drug Stores, Longs Drugs, Stater Brothers, and Lowes.



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Information flyers on WNV will be distributed in these stores. Additional information on WNV activity can be obtained through the DHHS' Information Line at (562) 570-4499.

What are the recommended preventive measures to avoid contact with mosquitoes?

DHHS recommends precautions that residents should take to avoid infection and urges residents to clean up any pools of standing, stagnant water that can provide a breeding ground for mosquitoes that can carry diseases such as WNV.

Recommendations for keeping mosquitoes under control on resident's personal property are as follows:

- Dispose of anything that can hold standing water such as tin cans, discarded tires, and plastic containers.
- Drain or fill low spots in the ground and drill holes in the bottom of outdoor recycling containers to prevent moisture from collecting.
- Change water in birdbaths, decorative fountains and pet feeding bowls often.
- Clean clogged roof gutters regularly.
- Sweep standing water in gutters.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools regularly.

Residents should avoid mosquito-infested areas at dawn or dusk, wear long sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors, ensure all operable windows are screened, and use insect repellent products with between 10%-50% DEET for adults. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends using products with a low concentration of DEET, 10% or less, on children aged 2 – 12 years. **Residents should follow instructions on the label. Consult with your child's pediatrician for appropriate concentrations used on children under the age of one.**

What are the symptoms of infection with West Nile virus?

Most people who are bitten by a mosquito infected with West Nile virus will not get sick. Approximately 5-15% of individuals will experience mild symptoms including headache, high fever, and fatigue. Less than 1% of individuals infected will become seriously ill with meningitis or encephalitis. Symptoms of meningitis and encephalitis are extremely variable but can include stiff neck, personality change, paralysis, seizures, and coma. Some people develop severe muscle weakness or paralysis.

Is there a treatment for West Nile virus?

There is no specific treatment for WNV infection or a vaccine to prevent it. Treatment of severe illnesses includes hospitalization to provide intensive supportive care, such as intravenous fluids and nutrition, respiratory support, and prevention of secondary infections. Persons who have symptoms suggesting severe illness should seek medical care as soon as possible.



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Does the DHHS work with local health care providers?

The City Health Officer has issued a medical alert to local health care providers and hospitals to report cases of WNV infection, which includes the more frequent milder cases of West Nile Fever, as well as the more severe infections, i.e. aseptic meningitis and encephalitis. Making WNV infection reportable in Long Beach, instead of the current requirement of reporting encephalitis, will provide better monitoring and earlier recognition of disease transmission to humans. Physician alerts are also sent to providers through broadcast fax and mailings, to better coordinate transportation and diagnostic WNV testing of specimens between the providers and the State Department of Health Services.

Who should I call if I find a dead bird?

An unusual die off of birds, especially crows, may be an early indication of WNV activity. The DHHS is asking for the community's help by reporting dead birds (most often crows) to 1-877-WNV-BIRD.

What if I have further questions?

If you have concerns about persistent standing water in public areas such as curbsides, please call the DHHS' Environmental Health Bureau at (562) 570-4132 (8am to 5pm Monday - Friday) or call the City of Long Beach Public Works Department at (562) 570-2700.

For updated information on WNV activity in Long Beach, please call the DHHS' Information Line at (562) 570-4499.

To report dead birds, please call 1-877-WNV-BIRD.

Websites

Long Beach DHHS:	www.longbeach.gov/health
Los Angeles County Department of Health Services:	www.ladhs.org
California Department of Health Services:	www.westnile.ca.gov
Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:	www.cdc.gov

Vector Control Programs

Long Beach DHHS Vector Control Program:	(562) 570-4090
Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District:	(562) 944-9656
Compton Creek Vector Control District:	(310) 639-7375